

Dahalik language

Dahalik (ደሳላክ [haka (na)] *dahālīk*, "[language (of)] the people of Dahlak";^[3] also Dahaalik, Dahlik, Dahlak) is an Afroasiatic language spoken exclusively in the Dahlak Archipelago in Eritrea. Its speech area is off the coast of Massawa, on three islands in the Dahlak Archipelago: Dahlak Kebir, Nora, and Dehil.

Dahalik belongs to the Afro-Asiatic family's Semitic branch, a member of the Northern branch of the Ethiopic group, and is closely related to Tigre and Tigrinya. It is said to be not mutually intelligible with Tigre and, according to Simeone-Senelle, is sufficiently different to be considered a separate language.^[4] However, there are those who disagree.^[5]

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Dahalik (ዳሳላክ)	
Dahaalik, Dahalik, Dahlak	
Native to	Eritrea
Region	Dahlak Archipelago
Native speakers	2,500 (2012) ^[1]
Language family	<p>Afro-Asiatic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Semitic ▪ West Semitic ▪ South Semitic ▪ Ethiopic ▪ Ge'ez ▪ Dahalik (ዳሳላክ)
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	d1k
Glottolog	daha1247 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/daha1247) ^[2]

Status

Dahalik is spoken on the Dahlak Archipelago, an island group belonging to Eritrea in the Red Sea. On the archipelago, most people are speakers of Dahalik with smaller populations of Arabic and Afar native speakers. The situation is different for every village: Durrubishet and Dasquo have almost universal use of Dahalik, while other villages have a greater mix of languages. Most islanders are multilingual in Dahalik, Arabic, and Afar, while the language of education is Arabic. Most Dahalik men have regular contact with Arabic, Tigre, and Afar, and any mixed marriages usually result in the children learning two mother tongues. Dahalik speakers also consider their language to be a mix of Arabic, Tigre, and a small amount of Tigrinya. Overall, there are only a few elderly monolingual speakers of Dahalik. However, Dahalik speakers do have positive attitudes towards the language, and see it as an essential part of their cultural identity.^[6]

Phonology

Vowels

/ɛ/ might be another vowel. The vowel /ə/ only occurs in unstressed syllables.^[6]

	Front	Back
Close	i	u
Open-mid	e	o
Open	a	

Consonants

Dahalik has 21 consonants.^[6]

Consonants

		Bilabial	Alveolar		Palatal	Velar		Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
			plain	ejective		plain	labialized			
Stop	voiceless		t	t'	c	k		q		
	voiced	b	d							
Fricative	voiceless	f	s		ç			(χ)	ħ	h
	voiced				ʃ			(β)	ʕ	ħ
Nasal		m	n							
Approximant			l		j		w			
Trill			r							

- The voiced uvular fricative /β/ is the most common articulation of /q/ in the intervocalic position, while the voiceless uvular fricative /χ/ is used after a fricative.
- The velar fricative /χ/ and the voiced alveolar sibilant /z/ are only used in loanwords from Arabic.
- Except for /c/ in a few cases, there are no ejective consonants in Dahalik, and the degree of pharyngealization in /t'/ is weak.^[6]

Morphology

Pronouns

Dahalik has two different forms for second and third person pronouns, one masculine and one feminine.^[6]

Masculine

	Singular	Plural
First	ana	neħna
Second	enta	intum
Third	itu	itun

Feminine

	Singular	Plural
First	ana	neħna
Second	enti	intun
Third	ita	itan

Dahalik also has dependent (object) pronouns, suffixed to the end of the word.^[6]

Masculine

	Singular	Plural
First	-(h)e, -ni	-na
Second	-ak	-kum
Third	-o, -(h)u	-(h)um

Feminine

	Singular	Plural
First	-(he), -ni	-na
Second	-ik	-kan
Third	-a	-(h)an

Verbs

The word order of a simple sentence in Dahalik is subject–object–verb. For conditional subordinate clauses, the subordinating marker ('if' or something similar) is at the end of the clause or just before the verb in the subordinating clause.^[6]

References

1. Dahalik (ዳያለክ) (<https://www.ethnologue.com/19/language/dlk/>) at *Ethnologue* (19th ed., 2016)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Dahalik" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/daha1247>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Marie-Claude Simeone-Senelle: Dahalík, a newly discovered Afro-Semitic language spoken exclusively in Eritrea (http://llacan.vjf.cnrs.fr/fichiers/Senelle/Dahalik_shaebla05.pdf) (PDF), in: shaebia.org, 2005
4. *Simeone-Senelle, Marie-Claude. 2000. 'Situation linguistique dans le sud de l'Erythrée', in Wolff/Gensler (eds) *Proceedings of the 2nd World Congress of African Linguistics*, 1997, Köln: Köppe, p. 261–276.
5. Idris, S. M. 2012. Dahalik: An Endangered Language or a Tigre Variety? *Journal of Eritrean Studies* 6 (1): 51–74.
6. Simeone-Senelle, Marie-Claude. "A Survey of the Dahalik language, an Afro Semitic language spoken exclusively in Eritrea" (https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/file/index/docid/319729/filene/me/Eritrean_Studies_2005.pdf) (PDF). HAL.

External links

- "Shaebia: Dahalik, a newly discovered Afro-Semitic language spoken exclusively in Eritrea" ([tp://llacan.vjf.cnrs.fr/fichiers/Senelle/Dahalik_shaebia05.pdf](http://llacan.vjf.cnrs.fr/fichiers/Senelle/Dahalik_shaebia05.pdf)) (PDF). (122 KiB)
- Shaebia: Dahalik – Mysterious Tongue of the Dahlak Islands (https://web.archive.org/web/20081218132819/http://www.shaebia.org/artman/publish/article_4496.shtml)

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